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SHAZLANI

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JILAWAH

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Schaffert

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AL BASHA

MAKINZUMATASUFA

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QARNAYN

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WARNING

IRAQ

Flight outside controlled airspace & ATS routes is PROHIBITED

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A8

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sakhs

police post

Udaybah

SUDAYN

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPED INTERVIEW WITH OFFICERS OF E TRP 2/2 ACR AND SCOUT
PLATOON LEADER FROM G TROOP 2/2 ACR, ON 3 MARCH 1991.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So, Tell me how the war went.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Well Sir, it went slow for us at first. All the troops were very anxious to attack. Spirits were very high as we crossed into Iraq. The first.... Do you want me to just recount?

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yes.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: The first operation centered on busting through the Saudi-Iraqi berm, which was a double berm approximately 15 feet high at its highest point. And a TASK force we were organized with an engineer platoon and an armored earth mover the ACE. THE platoon had rehearsed this previously, back in the assembly area before we had moved forward into the defensive sector, SOUTH of the Iraqi border. We had built a berm and actual gone through busting through it. at the time we felt there may have been some kind of enemy elements on the far side. In fact intelligence had indicated that certain enemy OPs were active within the Troop and Squadron zone forward of the berm. So we organized ourselves to really breach in stride. We brought forward the First Scout Platoon with the engineers. At the conclusion of the artillery barrage, they bolted forward of the berm, and reduced the berm very quickly. The berm was not a significant obstacle at all. It was just packed dirt. Our First Platoon provided near security for our engineers. While our Third Platoon moved up on the flank and was arrayed in depth to secure both the Troop's flank to the West and the western flank of the breach site. Once the breach was effected we got the

word from our First Platoon Leader and the tanks assaulted through. What we had done was set in overwatch in a large tank wedge, with Second Platoon on the left, in a echelon left, and Fourth Platoon on the right in a echelon right. My tank was the first to take off. Second Platoon followed in column and Fourth Platoon followed in column. We busted through the berm and on the far side arrayed back into the wedge formation. Third platoon on the flank came through next and took up its position again on the flank, which was a relatively open flank, although Third ACR had gone through the day previous, They were only tow kilometers forward of the border at the time. And then our trains passed through. First Platoon made sure everybody had gone through. Then they proceeded through and race to resume the lead of the troop formation.

Throughout the early stages of the offensive we moved in the left part of the Squadron Diamond Formation. Fox Troop was on our right at the point. So, based on our position in the Squadron formation we established our formation accordingly. It was something we had rehearsed and refined. We moved in what we called a troop modified column. With one scout platoon forward in a "V" formation, A, B, C sections, and one scout platoon arrayed in depth along the flank. Oriented to the flank to secure the Squadron and Regiments open western flank. As it was open the entire time, during the move up to flank the Republican Guards from the West. The tanks and the mortar section followed right behind the Charlie section of the lead scout platoon. And I can talk to you later about a technique that worked very effectively for us with the mortars, in the open desert. The the tanks followed in a large tank wedge with my tank following immediately behind the mortars, behind the scouts. The formation was great for us. It absolutely facilitated every battle drill we could conceivably run out of

that formation, and the trains tucked in behind the tank wedge and was a very good mutually supporting, and oriented in I guess approximately 180 degrees type formation. The first night we halted at Phase Line Bud. approximately 20 kilometers forward of the berm in the Troop zone. We had, had no contact. We used or reconnaissance by fire liberally on the way up there, because there had been some positions that had been previously occupied. So we pumped coaxial machine gun fire, 25 MM HEIT fire at anything that looked suspicious, to insure that we didn't bypass any enemy OP that could later report on our activities.

Once we consolidated Bud we established a screen there. With First Platoon oriented North. Third tied in with Third ACR and screening our western flank. And I had the tanks in hide positions, behind likely defensive positions. But I found that in the desert the enemy can go anywhere. So, its important to plan to defend your area against [any] type of threat. But most likely you will be committed to attack an enemy force that is attacking elsewhere. So, what we always did was strike a balance between an elaborately prepared defense and preparing to move out based on any kind of contingency even to our west or to our north with the tanks.

The next morning we resumed our movement forward and it rained real kind of miserable. We resumed our movement northward to Phase Line Busch. Which is approximately another fifteen kilometers North. Halted there and at that point I ordered all tanks to boresight and all weapons systems test fired. All machine guns and 25 MMs. We identified a couple of small problems with the feeders and so forth on the 25s. Corrected them and we were absolutely prepared to go from that point. We had heard that attacks elsewhere in theater were very successful. Mostly through BBC, and then latter

through intelligence channels (Laughter), But that keyed us to being ready, possibly to move forward a little bit earlier. And in fact we did that.

At noon we received the order to continue the attack to the North and to orient on Phase Line Dixie. And actually the Squadron moved about fifty (50) to sixty (60) kilometers in three to four hours time. It was a very fast movement we moved about thirty (30) kilometers an hour and kept the Squadron's combat power with us. The limiting factors are the mortar tracks, which are slow, 577s, FISTVs, and the artillery community in general. Just cannot keep pace with the Bradleys and tanks. Our service support guys and the combat trains interesting enough keep up rather well with the HEMMTs. Some of our tracked vehicles is what limited our speed. But I think the movement went very smoothly.

In route to Phase Line Dixie, Fox Troop made contact with several enemy dismounts forward of their positions. Which we felt may have been the outer edge of the enemy's security belt. In fact, they had established a security zone with some kind of dismounted infantry division. They [refers to F TRP] received small arms fire on the lead scout platoon pushing forward of the Squadron 10 to 15 kilometers. Returned fire with 25 MM and coaxial machine guns and the rest OF them surrendered. That was or first batch of prisoners in the Squadron and alerted all of us to be on the lookout that contact maybe emanate. Ghost Troop had a similar engagement and took some additional prisoners. But we had not made any contact at all up to Phase Line Dixie and I think that [is] attributable to the fact that we were the furthest western element and going most to the West. I think that most of the enemy forces were positioned in the East and oriented West.

Once we got to Dixie we stopped to refuel and we came up with a really good drill in the troop were we can maintain a 100 percent security around the troop sector and refuel very quickly. Once the HEMMTs are in route the tanks move into a double column the HEMTTs drive up the center of the column and top the tanks off. The first tanks....The First Tank Platoon, or actually by SOP the Second Tank Platoon moves forward of the scout screen which pushes out to greater secure us while we are most vulnerable. Second Platoon goes out to relieve 1st and places the tanks sections at the scout section OPs to secure the front while Fourth Platoon moves out to our left flank to relieve Third Platoon, mean while the trains and everything are refueling and by the time the scouts get back its just an even flow of vehicles. Scouts go back out and tanks come back into the center of the formation. We accomplished that right at night fall.

As it got dark my gunner picked up what we thought was moving vehicles to our front. We executed a good base of fire and maneuver operation with Bradleys from First Platoon and my tank but it turned out to be camels. We were a little bit disappointed.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Camel story! OK.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: On the way back...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: What did he detect that with?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: He detected it with thermal sights, and there was a small intervisibility ridge and all that could be seen were the bodies of the camels and occasional head of the camel moving parallel to that ridge and behind it. So it looked as if vehicles were moving and using that terrain to mask their movement.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: How far away was this?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Approximately 3500 meters.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So the camels at 3500 meters looked like vehicles.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yes, Yes they did. It was just that indistinguishable hot spot moving, and we knew there were no freindlys out there, and it was bigger than a small dot at that range

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yea, A camel is pretty large.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I've had my experience with camels.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: So later that evening we would have some genuine contact. SGT Lawrence's section, who is on the left most section of First Platoon oriented north, picked up an enemy platoon defensive position. Through the thermal sights at a range of...Mike how would you say he picked those guys up? At about 5 Ks?

LT PECHECK: Yes Sir. At about 5000 meters.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Your name is?

LT PECHECK: LT Pecheck.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: LT Mike Pecheck, First Platoon Leader.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: First Platoon Leader.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Correct. Once we studied the area with thermals, and Mike's guys did that of course. We could see three independent trench lines. In which the enemy soldiers were milling. They were just small dots through the thermals at that time. I went forward in my tank to assess the situation, linked up with mike, and what we decided to do was reduce the enemy position because they could have heard our activity to their front and might get ideas about probing our position and ascertaining exactly what they had out there. Mike's Charlie section and I moved forward as a base of fire and maintained contact with the enemy while SGT Lawrence and Mike's Bradley opened up with HEAT fire outside of the enemy's RPG range, and just raked the trench-lines with HEAT. There was what looked like a bunker in the center of their area and I engaged that and set it in flames with a tank HEAT round. We had observed thirty enemy in the area, and we only observed about four or five running away to the north. At that point I decided to break off the attack and not pursue them any further because our mission at that point was to consolidate our defenses. Consolidate our defensive area there and wait to continue the attack the next morning. And it would have taken us considerably out of the Squadron Zone to pursue them.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Did anybody.... A.. Go through the Position or what did you find on the position?? or Did You go through the position that night?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We didn't go through the position that night. The only thing we could observe were a lot of dead bodies in that area as we moved out the next morning. I didn't get the mortars into play, and I think they would be effective in that engagement, because Fox Troop scouts were taking a considerable amount of prisoners just north of that area. I thought mortar fire to be to inaccurate to engage the enemy without the danger of dropping on some of the Fox Scouts who may be dismounted taking prisoners..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: How close were the Fox Scouts?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Approximately 2000 meters? Right, but at that point, It turned out to be 2000 meters, the situation was very unclear. We could see Fox firing to our North, didn't have any additional elements outside where they were firing.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OK. Don't let me forget we want to come back to that mortar technique

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right, Right. Later that evening the mortars would get into action. LT Pechecks right most scout section picked out an enemy position forward of his screen again and he called for and adjust the mortar fire on to that position in a more traditional mortar sense. We had Global Positioning Systems, which are very great devices which every Armored Cavalrymen should have. And what we do as soon as we stop or have

a moment to stop either LT Pechecks track or my tank drive up next to the mortars and say, "Hey fellas, You're at this grid.." And we yell it to them. That way they can lay in and provide accurate fires with grid missions. We had done that. and then we lay in each of our OPs, since we only had one GPS per section, with the GPS. So each scout know exactly what his grid is up to a 12 digit accurately. So that was the general situation. SGT Patterson knew where he was, Mortar knew where they were just as in European terrain were you could read a map based on terrain association, and he called a grid mission forward of his position. With the mortars at night, we adjust the rounds in firing first a single WP round because its a very distinct signature easy to detect and adjust off of and its very easy to see through the thermal sights. When the WP round hit he gave one adjustment, it was on target, and we fired for effect. What we found was most useful against enemy infantry was to fire a mix of three PD and three VT rounds on their position, as a fire fore effect mission. We repeated it several times and we believe that we destroyed all enemy in that area. Because we could observe no more enemy movement through the thermals that was approximately 12...Was that right Mike? About 12 infantrymen there.

LT PECHECK: Yes Sir. That was the strength SGT Patterson called in..

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right.

LT PECHECK: Sir, there were at least two possible three distinct trench lines, and he could make out 12 people but there were probably more in there.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Did they have bunkers?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We couldn't... A that's a different trench line from the one SGT Lawrence called in. We weren't able to make out Bunkers, but it was like distinct trench line

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Did you go through the same place the next day?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: No Sir, we cut around what was it to the South? South, right. To the South and East.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I was just curious, Did they have any overhead cover?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: No, there was no overhead cover. Absolutely, you could see through the thermal sights. You could see about half their body through the thermals as they walked down the trench lines. Their trenches were very shallow.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Very ill prepared

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Very ill prepared. I mean that the most they could have done was kneel down and have any kind of cover. In fact in contrast to the intelligence estimates that we had that said these were elaborate trench lines. I think what important is you can't tell how prepared a defense is from satellite imagery. |You can only tell that there's a trench line there Or at least we were not apprized of any knowledge of how deep they were or how well prepared they were.

The next morning we continued our movement and we moved rather rapidly up to Phase Line, What was it? I think it was Lonestar. Is that right? No Phase Line Falstaff vicinity of objective Merrell, we passed through. And what struck us that day as we moved toward Phase Line Blacktop, which was a large MSE the enemy had been using, was that groups of 5 to 15 enemy soldiers were walking through the desert with nothing on but their green fatigues. They look exhausted. Needed food and water.; But what was puzzling was we could not observe any enemy positions for the whole move that day. From which these guys could have come. They must have walked a great distance and they were of course, with the Squadron formation being a rather imposing sight, they were very eager to let us know they were non-hostile. Waving to us wildly giving us thumbs up signs. Actually cheering us on to go kick the rest of their Army's ass. We wanted to keep the forward momentum, so the way we handled that kind of situation was that the scout sections would stop briefly and.....search these guys, give them food and water, tell them to stay there, report these guys and then our Engineer Company, as they weaved through the zone, picked these guys up, and the cavalry troops were able to maintain the momentum forward. Once we got to the vicinity of Phase Line "BLACKTOP", we refueled quickly and were ready to continue to the North and were rather disappointed, again, that we had been halted. The troops were just hungry for the first contact and we were anxious to get into the battle. We were put into a hasty defensive position in the vicinity of Phase Line "BLACKTOP", and the weather turned sour again. Once we got the defensive position established and the scout screens to the front of us, and the flank with third platoon, I moved forward of the Squadron CP in the rain in the hopes of getting some information about a continued attack.

Oh, I got to the Squadron CP and Ghost had some contact that day with the

first armored vehicles. They had destroyed two MTLB's and taken about six MTLB's, complete, captive and had taken a whole bunch of prisoners. And when we got to the Squadron CP, LT Mechave, from Ghost TRP, the XO, was leading a column of six MTLB's driven by the Ghost TRP mechanics, over to the TAC CP. So we got to go through a lot of their documents, look at their weapons, and their vehicles. Their weapons were in real vintage condition. We found one weapon in particular, one of their 7.62 machine gun had never been fired. Just right out of the box. The vehicles were in excellent shape, all though they are rather simple things like to deal with, but they were in good running condition, immaculate on the inside. So the troops that we had hit were easily distinguishable from those dismounted infantry we met earlier, and we had heard that one of the officers taken prisoner by Ghost TRP was an officer of the Republican Guards. So what I imagine is that this may have been their equivalent of a DIV CAV screen to the front. I think that may have been what we encountered there that night or a portion of that screen. Once in the CP, LTC Capal came back with some disheartening news that there were rumors of the Regiment already going into the reserve mission, and we were hoping to be employed more fully against heavier enemy formations. Once we left the CP, we returned to the pitch black, zero visibility, heavy cloud cover, pouring rain, thank God for GPS. It got me back to the TRP CP, and I passed on a new mission to the platoon leaders later that involved just a generally.....just a reorientation of our defense to the East now. Oriented towards where we later found the Tawakana was positioned. The TRP moved in to the North astride a....

LT GIFFERT: Also we had enemy contact in my sector.....While you were at the Squadron CP....

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Your name?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: LT Gueither.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: LT Gueither, Third Platoon Leader.

LT GUEITHER: LT Gueither sir.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OK, I see the "i" now. Gueither. So what had happened LT Gueither at a distance saw possibly an enemy convoy. we're not sure if it was friendly or enemy, but it was out at a great distance to our West.

LT GUEITHER: They were Northwest moving Southwest.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right. And it was possibly someone retreating, some of the enemy forces retreating. But our zone was such that there was no one to our Western flank. You scrambled what, how many Bradleys?

LT GUEITHER: Three.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Three Bradleys that were just hauling ass in the pouring rain and zero illumination to try to catch up with this convoy to gain contact with it and determine what it was, but they were gaining ground on us I guess they were on a prepared road or something. And we just couldn't gain contact with them. So a...

LT GUEITHER: And both my sections, the one in the North and the one in the West picked them up at the same time they just picked up one vehicle and we moved forward a little more and we positioned ourselves to see it better and we picked up about five vehicles. At that point is when I called the CP and asked permission to pursue the contact. As we got closer, we were able to make out eleven vehicles, but they were gaining ground on us. We had just gotten to a little more dominate terrain were we could see them briefly and we came over the terrain and we lost them in the intermittent terrain and we couldn't see them, they were hauling ass.

MAJ SNADRIDGE: OK

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And we sent a tank platoon out in support of that effort and pulled them back when we saw that gaining contact was infeasible.

The next morning again we reoriented our defense with Ghost to our South we were positioned on Ghost North in a relatively narrow sector, and then Fox TRP had the mission to continue to cut this Phase Line "BLACKTOP" and orient to the North. So they were arrayed to our northern flank and in depth of the Squadron oriented North, while Ghost and I, Ghost and we were oriented to the East.

Later that, or that morning, I had just gone to each of the Red's OP's and looked at our screen and insured that the Troops security was well established and I was on the ground talking to the mortars establishing a fire plan we had just laid them in when SGT Patterson, Mikes' Platoon SGT, yelled "Contact, three MTLB's, direct front!" Well, I jumped in my tank, started it up, and went up there to see what was going on. Ghost TRP was already engaging the three MTLB's and had destroyed two with 25MM, but one at a range of about 2500 meters was trying to break contact. I said to

SGT Patterson, "SGT Patterson, do you think that MTLB has my name on it?" And he said, "It's got your name written all over it." And (laughter), and we hit it with a HEAT round at about 2640 meters, and it hit the MTLB dead on and which was a small target. I am a believer in service ammunition 100%. I mean it's incredibly more accurate than training ammunition. It hit the MTLB and it erupted in a huge fireball and the fire burned for hours.

About an hour and a half later we got a mission to move further to the South. The Squadron zone had collapsed in the North and gained ground in the South. We moved South of the Ghost TRP to establish contact with Iron TRP on our right with Third Squadron and Ghost TRP on our left. We moved South through what now had become a heavy fog and in fact this is one time when we really employed the GSR. Because I was reluctant to always do it because of the huge signature it puts out, and we could see better without optics than the GSR could. When we were in position where we could see with our Bradleys, we could see well beyond 10 K's in both daylight and especially with our thermals, so I had really held my GSR back through out this action up to this point. At this point, I gave them to my First Platoon to turn them on because we weren't picking up anything with the thermals or with daylight optics. Once we were established astride Iron TRP, we conducted another refuel operation and really thought at that point that our hopes were dashed and we were not going to make any significant contact.

We were sitting there in our defensive positions and we got the order to attack in five minutes to the.....what, was it the 67 Easting?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right, 62 Easting And as we moved forward of the 62 we received a report of a moving target indicators at grid 63 something 03 something. Well that was right where we were and they were going to bring a MRLS mission on us. So I was screaming to my FIST to check fire and I went up on the Squadron net to scream, and evidently the intelligence acquisition sources at higher levels were reporting us as enemy moving target indicators. But the system always worked perfectly as far as FIST always reporting our front line traces and the Squadron FSE had already check fired it. So we were in no danger. So had the Regimental FSE by the way.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: They check fired it?

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yeah, they were linked in too. The fire support guys were wonderful in that respect.

CPT H.R. McMASTER Well, they really did a fantastic job in that, and I think that one of the keys is that I resourced my FIST with a GPS so that it gave us several advantages. One was that he was constantly able to give us his front line trace, on his own GPS, and he wasn't relying on what's your front line trace now talking to the scouts. Also with the GLID and the NSG hooked into the DMD, he could halt, know his position perfectly, lase to a target eight digit grid for an indirect fire target, so I think it was important to give him the navigation capability in the desert.

We continued on to the 62, stopped there.

? Sandstorm picked up.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Sandstorm picked up and we were still hungry for combat in fact. I believe 100% in giving a complete fragmentary order. And I've always done that these guys know, situation, mission, concept all the time and task, but I was so excited to finally attack that I just said, "Well men, this is the moment we have waited for. We attack in five minutes. Get ready to go." And everyone was pretty much familiar with the operations and formation we were moving in, but we were all just very excited. But what we really didn't have was a good picture of what the enemy immediately forward of us was. And in fact, Tim Gueither called and said, "Do you know what kind of contact we can expect forward?" And I said, "Enemy contact."

And he said, "Roger, out." Well, the fact is no one had a good picture of what to expect. We knew there was something out there, but we didn't know what it was. We didn't know how much, how big, or what it was, but it was a very accurate enemy contact.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: That's OK.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: After holding at the 62, I think just as we were pulling up on the 62, they said you can go ahead to the 67. Well, we hit the 67 and then we heard now you can go to the 70 and it was just a lurching kind of thing instead of the fluid type of operation we would have expected, and, I think, we would have been more comfortable with. We first took enemy fire from a large building complex surrounded by a berm in the southern portion of our zone, just to the north of our boundary with Third Squadron. Third platoon on our flank, was affected by that fire..taking some small arms fire. In fact, four enemy soldiers surrendered immediately upon contact with us. SGT McReynolds, one of our scout section leaders,

went to take the four prisoner, and, upon doing so received direct small arms fire from this compound. I decided to suppress the enemy position there and move North of it because it was right on the boundary and I thought we were going to be shooting more to the East rather than fight these little enemy soldiers who were firing at us. Now, the way we decided to suppress it was to use 25 MM HEIT at first. Then I ordered the tanks to come up on line and gave a troop fire command of buildings, direct front, one round SABOT, correction, one round HEAT at my command, and we fired a volley of nine HEAT rounds into the buildings and berms, which obscured the infantry fighting positions. The buildings caught on fire from that position.

We, at that point, swung further to the North. First platoon was in the lead, but we were jockeying back to get in formation, and being the very patient guy by nature, (general laughter).

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I notice everyone laughing, OK.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: I was on Mikes' ass to just get going. I said just keep on going, let's go. What are you waiting for? What I hadn't known was that on his platoon net, he was getting a report of contact with an armored vehicle, with a tank to his front. Well in the mean time I had decided to go to a tanks lead formation. I felt contact was eminent and we were losing momentum with the Bradleys forward. So I said, go to tanks lead, White and Green follow my move. And I pulled up astride the scout sections and to describe the terrain, there was an indeterminable ridge across which we travelled. It was just a small dip in the ground that you couldn't discern from just observing to your front. And my tank was the first to go over that ridge. White and Green were tucking into the tanks wedge and

maneuvering through the scouts at this point. As we came over the ridge my gunner yelled tanks direct front and I just scanned to my front quickly and the enemy was arrayed in a defensive position with vehicles very close together. They had not attempted to disperse their vehicles in the desert at all. And they had pushed up berms of loose dirt which not only marked their position but also inhibited their ability to engage us with their guns. They would have to lay their guns to the side of these berms to effectively engage us. So I quickly counted eight of those and I yelled, "Contact eight armored vehicles direct front." At that point, I gave a fire, fire sabot fire command on the first tank. We fired a HEAT round at a T72 and destroyed it in a spectacular manner at a range of 1420 meters. I still remember that. As we were traversing to the next tank, our loader of course was pumping in the SABOT round. I was giving some additional direction to the troop and let them know what I had seen forward of them. The tank platoons had still not crested that ridge so we were fighting solo for about six seconds, which seemed like six hours. The second tank we laid on we hit with a sabot round and out of the corner of my eye I could see the first tank we hit. I could see one of the vehicle crewman trying to get out of the tank while his body was on fire. We fired at the second T72 and the SABOT round travelled so fast that I could not distinguish the blast of the gun and his tank erupting in flames. I think the SABOT hit in a hail of sparks and then must have ignited the ammunition compartment in the crew..a..compartment.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: What range were you firing at?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Probably again at 1400 to 1500 meters. Cause he was just in depth. Other enemy turrets now were swinging on me because I was the target of choice. The only guy who was above the ridge at the time. But now as I was firing my third round and in fact killing the third tank, Second and Fourth platoons, LT Destefeno Fourth Platoon and LT Hamilton's Second Platoon, came over the ridge. In fact, John would you call those guys up and see if they can come over here. Maybe they can add some details. And they engaged two tanks which had just engaged my tank and had missed at that close range. Their T...T72s and T62s which at first I thought were T55s was just a rounded turret and in the heat of it and I didn't take a lot of time for vehicle ID. But they had fired SABOT rounds at my tank and had missed one to the left of me and one to the right of me and I didn't even notice it. Apparently small arms fire was raking my tank and I didn't even notice that either and I was still up out of the hatch. You know kind of in a very excited about the whole situation. But when Second and Fourth Platoon came up, and I think that Tank Table XII is the perfect training for tank platoons, when they came up over that hill they simultaneously engaged at different targets. And immediately to our front we saw eight armored vehicles erupt into flames. Different targets, I mean we just took a huge chunk out of the enemy in the first rounds fired from the tanks. At this point the instructions given over the net were for, as is our SOP, for the tanks to lead and the scouts to array to the flanks of the tanks and to secure the rear as we cross the objective. And we had rehearsed this in case we had been an assaulting element of a Squadron base of fire and maneuver operation. The contact here had been to close we didn't have a traditional base of fire and maneuver element. We were merely moving through the enemy and maintaining security that a base of fire usually provides you by our scouts arrayed in depth behind the tanks.

As we rolled across the objective we were now I would say, about even with the enemy's front line defense and passing through the burning vehicles. The scouts were engaging out to the flanks with 25 MM beyond the field of scan of the tanks had covered. The field of fire that the tanks had covered and were destroying BMPs and MTLBs on the flanks and occasionally stopping to fire TOW rounds in depth of the enemy position forward of the tanks and also off to the flanks.

LT GIFFERT: There were some tanks still on the flanks their defensive positioned extended all the way down past the logger about..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Was that pretty tricky trying to fire through the tanks?

LT GIFFERT: We were far enough outside the tanks to take care of it like this, we were far enough outside and oriented this way so we did not have a problem.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And that's how we rehearsed it so that everyone, no one would mask anyone else's fires, and the formation lent itself to that. The tanks and also...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Kind of like going back to gunnery ranges then.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yes Sir, exactly, and you know the tanks were killing everything to their fronts and I'd say on a 45 degree angle to their flanks. The scouts then tucked in behind the tanks were orienting on more of 90 degrees to that 45 degrees and were killing things out in forward of the tanks a long the 45 degree azimuth to the direction movement.

[PLATOON LEADER COMMENTS NEED TO WORK ON TAPE QUALITY]

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And you know we had talk about this at the Advanced Course and I had seen it used at NTC, I was a... When I was there, and it works very effectively if the Bradley's come in behind the tanks in the assault and there is not much written about the assault in our doctrine. But it is very effective as an assaulting element to have tanks forward and have Bradley's in depth and when the tanks blow through, of course they focus on armored vehicles destroying those. And you always have the danger as we did here that the enemy in foxholes would be overlooked initially and they could come up and become a threat to your rear.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: With RPGs?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Exactly, and in fact some enemy attempted to do that. And in fact, Tim I think it was your platoon, when second...when fourth platoon rolled by the enemy as if they had rehearsed this and I believe they had, had discussed doing this, were laying on the front of their bodies with their hands covering their eyes on top of their weapons. As the tanks rolled by the enemy would get up off their weapons, pick them up and attempt to engage tank commanders or attempt to engage the grills of tanks with RPGs. As they were getting up the Bradleys were cutting them down with 25MM HEIT and coaxil machine gun fire.

LT GUEITHER: Me and my guys when we got up even with that bunker complex, we were still taking a lot of fire from that bunker complex.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: That's right.

LT PECHECK: *It had stopped initially cause I had cease fired my platoon, but as we move forward again we started taking a lot more fire from inside the bunker compound.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Would an infantry platoon have been of any value?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yes, well, yes they would have because what could have happened they could have been the final element when we came across. After the , if I had been an infantry team commander or a tank team commander the way I would have organized the assault would be tanks assault through first. Bradleys come through and clean our pockets of enemy dismounted resistance and destroy enemy vehicles to the flank, much as we had done and then the final belt of the assault could have been guys you let off the ramps of the M2 to come forward and put the final stop to anything on the objective. So I think that it would have been helpful

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Provide you more security and you wouldn't have wasted any scout effort.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Exactly, but the way their positions were organized, and their positions were poorly dug in, we were killing hundreds of infantry as we came across the objective and the one engagement LT Gueither was describing. As an example engagement to the flank he was taking 23 MM fire from a towed Anti-Aircraft gun. Is that what it was?

LT GUEITHER: Sure was. We saw it when we came back south a few days later. We were taking fire from ZSUs, too.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: What was it?

LT GUEITHER: ZSU

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So a ZSU was knocking at you?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right.

LT GUEITHER: There was more than one.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And he was in a well dug-in bunker. Evidently they had prioritized their overhead protection to Anti-Aircraft Guns. When he took fire from that position, a well dug in ZSU with overhead cover, he organized a simultaneous firing of TOW missiles. Two TOW missiles were launched simultaneously, one from each end of the platoon on the flank, as they were arrayed on the flank. The first TOW missile destroyed the bunker and the second one went in and just...right behind it. Right, behind it, and destroyed the ZSU. That was just an example of many of the types of engagements that were going on, on the flanks as the tanks were continuing to roll through the objective and destroy enemy armor vehicles which were arrayed through the depth of the position. I cannot understand the organization of their position because their front positions were in a very good reverse slope defense. I mean 1400 meters it equalized our stand-off with their weapons capability. But as you went in depth their position, they had many of these berms in depth where their tanks could only engage us at

very short range. They had no fields of fire I think beyond, what 600-800 meters.

? Not out there.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: With there tank main guns and BMPs.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: How about you?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: That's what we were limited to also.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So you were back to battle sight almost?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right we were at a..... Well you know the lasers worked great the whole time. I mean at that close range! Even with the dust, there was a sandstorm blowing at the time, the lasers within the 1500 meters we were engaging gave us perfect returns.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OK

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We were just continuing to destroy enemy armored vehicles, huge fireballs, sparks erupting everywhere, and John Giffert the Exec called me from the CP and said....I could tell he didn't want to tell me, and he said, "Just a reminder the 70 was the limit of advance." And I said, What the hell did I say? I think

LT GIFFERT: "I'm sorry, I can't stop. [GENERAL LAUGHTER]"

CPT H.R. McMASTER: "I'm sorry I can't stop," something like that. "Just tell them I can't stop." Because the danger was we were in the midst of the enemy's position and if we had stopped we would have lost all of our shock effect of our tanks in the formation and our Bradleys on the flanks and the effects the enemy was feeling from our firepower. It would merely have allowed the enemy to regroup in smaller elements and allowed the enemy to bring more effective fire on us so at that point I continued to move until I could find an apparent gap in the defense. And I found that just beyond the 73 Easting. It was another small indeterminable hill that allowed observation out several kilometers in each direction and it was also an apparent gap in the enemy's defense were there were no longer any enemy vehicles immediately to the East.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So it was a good place to stop.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Also right behind that hill was a small depression, in which we could put the tanks and they were effectively shielded by and direct fire that would have come at us from the flanks. Now we are in the business of consolidation and still though engaging enemy tanks out to what? About 3000 meters and the TOWs were launching out to what must have been max range and what we were engaging at that point were groups of one and two tanks, groups of one and two BMPs, Robar trucks fleeing to the East. As TOW missiles pursued and caught up to them and blew them up. And then constant, constant, machine gun for what well over two hours I would say. The enemy infantry who had escaped a bit to the east were in a series of these berms which continued far to the east, forward of our position. And they were milling about, running back and forth between these berms and we periodically would fire HEIT ammunition and coax ammunition or 50

caliber ammunition at them. And of course with the occasional destruction of enemy vehicles I described earlier. Then we got the mortars into the full play as soon as we stopped. our FIST laid the guys in. Gave them their grid and we started calling for and adjusting mortar fire on them. Again using WP as a marker, shifting and then firing for effect. We could tell as it was getting dark that night through the thermals that the mortars were taking a very heavy toll on the enemy. And in fact POWs that we took later eluded to that fact, that the mortar section had really broken the enemy's back when they were down. One thing I would say as a plug as far as our organization goes that we need a faster mortar track, the tubes are archaic. The ones we have are very old and sometimes we get hung rounds, and three tubes would give us a good effect. A much better effect on the enemy. Two tubes we have to use traversing fire once we get on the enemy's position. But three I would give us enough spread for a cavalry troop. That we could fire, fire for effect missions, on a squad position and cover the entire thing.

? Also some people had been trying reoccupy vehicles that we thought we had already destroyed, because I had two MTLBs in my sector we killed that night after it got dark...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: You killed it with 25 earlier?

? Yea we killed that with 25 earlier but we saw some personnel come out of a bunker and climb up on top. At first we thought

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Just a second. Stop for a second lets take a quick break.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: You were the one talking, right?

? Right. We were talking about we had thought we destroyed these MTLBs with 25 MM fire earlier in the day as we closed on where we would eventually establish our defensive positions. But that night my gunner observed some personnel coming out of a bunker and they were climbing on top of the MTLBs. And you could tell they were trying to start the , cause the back of the engine would glow and then go out, and blow and then go out. What the fuck these guys are trying to start them up again. So we put up our TOW and pumped a TOW round into it and we killed the other one with 25. The guy came shooting back up out the hatch. We were pretty sure we killed them by that point. No one went near them again that night.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: The vehicles were unusable at that point I would say. At that point we consolidated on the objective and the way we had organized our forces with the tanks stopped just on the front slope of that hill described. We moved the Bradleys to secure the flanks and rear of the position. At night as it was getting dark I thought there was a grave danger if I had arrayed the troop in a text book hasty defense with scout forward and tanks in depth and scouts to the flank. Because if we remained tied in laterally there could be no mistake about who was friendly and who was enemy. The tanks were basically in the center with Fourth Platoon on the right and then Third Platoon to their flank and then arrayed in depth to secure the East. Again continuous mortar fire lots of secondary explosions going off in enemy vehicles we had destroyed. Just and, as it got dark just and eery red glow everywhere around us. and at that point I was concerned about our flanks we had, had overlapping observation with Ghost Troop. Frankly I was really reluctant to do so at the time. I felt

we had a very stable situation there. We knew where we were. We knew where the enemy was and although we had covered the ground between ourselves and Ghost with observation and fire we had not physically cleared that ground. At that point though I ordered Mike Pecheck to send a section north to link in with Ghost. We did a lot of close coordination with Ghost on their net. We said, Hey, these guys are coming, this is where they are going to, this is the route they're taking, and so forth. Well, my heart pretty much sank when I heard Mike report contact two tanks on his way up to the contact point. And I was ready to send Mike Hamilton's Second Platoon out to support him. When he reported that he had destroyed two T72 tanks with TOW missiles at close range.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So, he was fighting his way to the contact point.

LT PECHECK: Right Sir. You see Ghost was approximately, about three and a half to two kilometers behind to the west of where we was, and a tank company minus which turned out to be 7 or 8 T72s, that were in position on our left flank on the North North Eastern side. As I was going up to make coordination there was some burning going on in that AO but we really kind of stumbled on those t72s all of a sudden. The gunner said, "OH, shit!" We stopped and fired them up. And then we continued moving and linked up not with Red Ghost but with Blue Ghost and tied in. Brought his vehicles over to Eagle to see where they would be. And on the way back we saw two more vehicles there. They weren't moving but we fired them up. As a result we were tied in and Ghost started moving up a little more and they started taking a lot more of the fire from the T72s.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right, and we had a complete physical contact there, between the two troops. I think about that time the enemy was attempting to organize some kind of a piece meal counterattack on us, and we saw their vehicles in depth behind the berms and would periodically pick up observation and lose observation, because [of] the berm net work to the front. But we were arrayed in sufficient width that someone was bound to have a good clean shot at the guys. For example my tank picked one coming up towards us and we lost them behind one of the berms, but Mike Hamilton's tank to my left had a clean shot on them and said he was going to kill them. Fired a SABOT round through the enemy's turret. Off the tank blew the turret completely off and a hail of sparks. The most spectacular explosion I have ever seen in my life. On what I believe was a T72. At that point I called Mike on the net and I said, "Mike that was...I said White this is Black Six that was spectacular." He said, "Yes, that is known as the Hammy Slammy." [GENERAL LAUGHTER BY ALL]

So, humor still had its place in the fight. But a

LT DANNY DAVIS: We've got that on tape if you want to listen to it

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We taped the battle.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: You taped the battle?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yes

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I would like a copy of the tape of the battle.

LT DANNY DAVIS: We've got the fire support net and the command net.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: They bled over each other a lot but you can sort through it.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: That's super! I would like to get a copy of that tape to take back to Fort Knox. That would be outstanding!

CPT H.R. McMASTER: You know we had a problem tying in with higher.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Roger.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And this is an important point I think for all troop commanders, or any company commander to realize is that, will describe how he did it, is that it is absolutely important for flank units to coordinate over the radio as they move and the troop CP is a great facility to do that in, except that the vehicle, the vehicle is a piece of junk. But with four FM nets in there what we habitually do is with the unit that we feel it is most important for us to maintain contact with we monitor their frequency and are active on the net, informing them of our front line trace and getting the same kind of information from them at their troop level and maintain liaison between troops, between our troop CP and their troop commander and CP. The platoon on our flank. The scout platoon frequency and this was an inter-squadron boundary but we were very well tied in with them because we had that duplicity of nets there. That duplication of nets between each of us. We were able to constantly get up dates of were their front line trace is, they know where we were. So, when they scanned over in our area and saw a hot spot they'd say aw that's Eagle, because I

remember they were just talking to us and said, Hey we're up at this grid now. What LT Gueither established immediately was an RFL, once we had halted between Iron Troop and ourselves. What he basically did was look out to his flank, determine their positions, shoot and azimuth, and tell the troop shoot everything, anything east of 120 degrees, you can shoot, do not shoot beyond 120 degrees. So, all the confusion was lifted at that point. In fact at one time, LT Destefino's platoon picked up an enemy vehicle off to our right flank. He said, is it friendly or enemy? I said, is it east of 120 degrees. He said, Roger. I said, Kill it. And we killed it. So immediate establishment of an RFL, when you don't have a TRP like in Europe, like don't shoot past that church steeple or don't shoot past that tree line, in the desert is a magnetic azimuth.

LT GUEITHER: We had a problem with that because at the same time we were consolidation they were in the thick of their battle, right then. So their commander didn't have a whole lot of time total to us on his net. And, we were having real difficulty talking to them on their platoon net. So, I switched one of my other tracks to monitor their troop net and we were at least able to monitor what the picture was. Based on just monitoring reports that they were sending up higher. And, that was almost based on not even really talking to them. They said that they had halted and were halting there. And, finally our troop CP was able to talk to them once it calmed down a little in sector. Iron six really didn't want to talk to us.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I understand.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: He was my Beast Barracks roommate at West Point, so I jumped up on his net and said, "Hey, Dan talk to me." [GENERAL LAUGHTER]

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We got it all sorted out then.

[A UNCLEAR SEGMENT OF TAPE, WIND]

CPT H.R. McMASTER: At this time now that the battle had waned a bit we were continuously firing our mortars and basically almost used up our basic load. We had used about 80 percent of our basic load. The First Sergeant had weaved his way precariously back and in fact was engaged by artillery and 50 CAL machine gun.

LT GIFFERT: Two different times.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Two different times., Yea. What we learned from that is that absolute coordination with our units to the rear that we have units displacing back that way and plus I think they were remiss in their duties to make positive identification. Anyway...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: What was he mounted in?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: In a M113.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OK.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We a.. thank God they were a poor shot. I called the FIST and said look call on the FSE net and tell all these artillery dicks, No offense I love Artillerymen., not to shoot our First Sergeant. He's coming back with the LOGPAC. Cause he had called and he [was] at the combat trains. He said, "Man what's going on." So we put it out over the FSE net as well as dropping down to troop internal nets to tell them they would see this activity, resupply activity coming forward.

The push package worked at the squadron level. We had HEMMTs configured with ammunition suited to the troop and of course our habitual fuel support. We moved down into that lower area, I described for the trains. Rotated a vehicle back tank and scout, one tank at a time back to that area to pick up ammunition and to refuel. And, that went pretty quickly, much more quickly than it does in training. There's a hell'uv a lot more reason to do it fast. No time to shoot the shit with the mechanics, you know time to get back up there. We got a complete upload back to 100 percent. We had carried a lot of 25MM HEIT ammunition,, as much as we could up to what squadron had for us, in our maintenance sergeants HUMMWV and in the 88. We carried additional TOW missiles in the 88. And, we had already resupplied with those items and that helped us our quit a bit, and kept us up there in the high amber range for ammunition all though we were expending quit a bit.

It was not a problem as furious as the combat was having only 17 rounds ready in the M1 tank. I just called when I was ready to take mine out of semi-ready, I'd say, Hey White One cover me, and we're swapping our rounds out. An important thing from a tank gunnery perspective is not to take the ones out of the hull, and we had decided to do this much earlier, but to

take them out of the semi-ready side and put them in the ready side. And then what you get later you put in the semi-ready side, So, the ammo temperature equalizes because that really does significantly effect the flight of the round. And, we just left the hull ones in the hull cause the the ammunition temperature was different from the readings we imputed in the computer.

So, the resupply was complete, we were still firing some machine gun, I think, out to our front. At that point it was apparent that the enemy's will to resist was just about a bust. And, MAJ McGregor, the Squadron S3, called up the Psychological Operations Team. Well I had them come to the troop for a briefing on their capabilities before, also as a novelty thinking, yea right we'll never use these dicks, right. Well actually they did come forward and were very effective. They were good troops, the PSYOPs guys. And, they had a Kuwaiti interpreter with them. They pulled up right next to my tank and what I had them do was broadcast from each corner of my defensive position. And, when they started the broadcast, I think the guys said basically, you guys have fought well, and you've done a good job, it's time to hang it up and go see your families and so forth, we will treat you nice, we're friendly guys, and so forth. Well, these guys were just coming our from everywhere. It seemed at first just like countless numbers but it turned out to be 42 initially. They came out of the berms to our front. And, you could tell as the PSYOPs guys shout instructions in Arabic that they were responding to that. They were carrying a large white flag on a wooden staff, and behind them they all fell in single file with their hands up. I detailed Third Platoon to provide a scout squad as the POW search team and security team. And they went over to augment the PSYOPs guys, as well as the crew from the Regimental TAC CP, who had fought

forward with us all day, as well as MAJ McGregor and his tank. The TAC CP crew came over and assisted us in processing these guys. Everything was text book, as far as the search and so forth, you know segregate them, put them in rows. We captured on enemy major, who apparently was the commander of a MECH Infantry BN [MAJ MOHAMMED, 52ND REGT, 9TH BN, TAWIKANA DIV] of the Tawikana reinforced with tanks, who claimed that the 41 soldiers he brought with him were all that remained alive of his unit. We then, between then and the next morning we would take a hundred plus more prisoners.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I heard the PSYOPs guys were very effective, also because the Kuwaiti guys were real calm and talked even keel in the midst of all the sit going on, bullets still flying they were still....

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Exactly..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Just very, like the ... Almost the only sense of calm in the storm.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: That's right, That's right! They also each of them had the little pamphlets that was dropped by the....

MAJ SANDRIDGE: The message pamphlets?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right, they had them in their shirts. When we caught POWs, we caught a few ourselves. You know they had them in their pockets. They held them up, they were like you know, are you going to comply with this thing. We were like, yea don't worry, we won't hurt you.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: How did the POWs react to when you started acting decent to them?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: They were absolutely surprised. You could see the absolute surprise in their faces that they were being treated so humanly. Because, once we searched them and insured that they weren't concealing no weapons and so forth, and segregated and silenced them. We went through and our medic was treating all these guys asking them if they had any medical problems through the interpreter. We gave them food, we gave them water, a couple of our soldiers gave them their spare boots, because some of these guys were bare foot. There were tears rolling down a lot of their eyes. A lot of guys. A lot of them were crying they tried to kiss our feet. They were absolutely amazed at how well they were treated.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: They were treated like soldiers?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: They were treated like soldiers, right.

LT DANNY DAVIS: One guy asked, "How come we didn't shoot them?" And I'll tell you that..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: What was the answer? What was the answer?

LT DANNY DAVIS: Well we said, "We don't do things that way. That's just not the way we do things." And he was astounded. What?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: That's our first Danny Davis

LT DAVIS: The COs going to get to it, but the next day there were even more POWs. And you could really see something that they, we talked to a CPT or something and he said, that they had been told by their superiors that we would in fact torture them and kill them. That they were told to do the same thing if they captured any American POWs. So it was totally beyond their comprehension why we weren't doing anything after the initial search and a little bit of rough housing getting them to comply afterward. Giving them MREs and water. They were just totally, a lot of them just broke down and weeped.

? These guys kneeling down and LT Gueither comes up, and we were setting there and they looked up at us so we gave them some bottled water, and they said they hadn't had water or food for seven days...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: This is a different group though not these Republican Guard guys, this is the next day in a new area that we moved to. Right.

? And they were still doing liking praising and they were pulling out their; they have these beads that they pray with, like a rosary type thing, and they have a stone that has some kind of designs that they used for praying I guess to Allah or whatever; and they pulled that out and said Oh, thank you. They thought we were going to shoot them because our weapons were on them to guard them, and they thought you know, and they were shaking and stuff, and we said we aren't going to hurt you, but you need to go along with the search and stuff, they said they had been hiding, they had been hiding in these foxholes for days...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: This was a medical unit that, those guys were from a medical unit, that when we displaced back to the south and east a little bit. We picked these guys up on our way.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yea, we ran into a similar experience at the Regimental TOC. Picked up a bunch and a. Stopped and OK gave them food, checked them, did the regular S check, and then a ..OK you guys are clean gave them some food and water, now here's what you need to do, here's your flag and here's this, there will be somebody along to pick you up in a little while, take you back to a place where you can stay the night. And they were just shocked. Pure amazement and then they were _ kissing the HHT CDR's feet, you know the same routine, kissing his hands....

? Trying to show you pictures of their family and kids...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yea, You know man put that back, get back... You know we where trying to treat them humanly and all but we didn't want to make friends with these Dicks.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I think the shock was we have learned a sense of honor. There is a honor among soldiers and they didn't realize that we were attune to that...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right. And I think that it's also attributable to discipline. I mean we were in intense, in mean combat more intense than I think any of us ever imagined, cause you know prior to this we all thought - what's combat going to be like. I know I had poured over it, and thought how to better prepare the Troop for it. Whatever I imagined the fight was

going to be like, and I never imagined anything quit so furious and so compacted in time and space.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: And yet it seemed like forever.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Exactly, and as soon as.. Just as intensely as we had turned it on, we could turn it off, each of our tank commanders, each of our gunners. And in one incident we had a Robar truck approach our perimeter. Now I thought what's this guy doing. It was at night and he hadn't seen us. And I said hold your fire until we know what he's doing, till we see what's going on.

Maybe he's coming to surrender. And even though we had been told there were no mounted surrenders, I thought would be a, it would have been inhumane to just blow that truck away. And he closed within 200 meters of the perimeter in front of SGT Foy's tank, LT Destefino's platoon sergeant. And....

He told his gunner when he thought they may be getting a little to close to fire some warning shots in front of the truck. So he let loose with the COAX, and fired across the front of the truck, but the truck didn't stop. So at that point, he decided to disable the truck, and engaged it with coax and 50 CAL, basically destroyed the truck. The prisoners, correction soldiers dismounted the truck...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: With their weapons initially, brandishing their weapons. And then when they saw our forces there, they hastily through their weapons down and tried to kick dirt over them. Hoping we wouldn't see them, and stuck their hands in the air.. (laughter)..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Whoops, they came to far.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Our medic as he was treating, SGT Pewatts, as he was treating a enemy litter patient, in his ambulance, and evacuating him back to the aid station. And the enemy prisoner tried to grab some needles and tried to stab SGT Pewatts with the needles. Well he hit him in the face with the butt of his M16, knocked the guy out, and continued to treat him. So I just think that's kind of an interesting story.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Okay

CPT H.R. McMASTER: But I'd say at that point then, Ghost troop had been in heavy contact while our battle was really waning. And they had received the preponderance of artillery during the fight because they were, they were fighting forward of their positions, where we had driven through the enemy's position to a point of minimal enemy resistance. They had pulled up to a point where they had fought through some enemy elements and now they had the bulk of enemy forces to fight now as they were halted. So their battle was still raging, in fact they had other enemy elements, that I think they said latter where part of the 12th Armored moving north in front of you...

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes Sir, we had three elements that we had to engage. We worked our way through the forward security elements right around 1500 about the 60 grid line that CPT McMasters talked about earlier. And as we pulled up to the 70 we had engaged some tanks down in the southern sector and three tanks up in my sector. Pulled forward to the 73 and as we were

establishing my gunner just opened up and reported immediate kills and 20 infantry. That was the beginning of hell, that was about 1630 hours and until about 2230 we were in a fire fight. Taking and giving. The fight started, like I said, about 1630 with some PCs and troops, and right about 1630 the tanks had been moving into position in the center. We had been arrayed slightly differently with the scouts on the flank of the northern sector, we were on the flank of the regiment. We had to tie in with Third Armor Division, that turned out to be a big chore. So as the tanks pulled up on the 73 they charged through, and took out a couple of PCs and pulled on back. And then we had the T72s started rolling in.. I think the bulk of the attack that CPT McMasters just mentioned happened around ..

2000 or so..

Well sir the first wave came in probably about 1700. We had 12 tanks coming south to north up this wadi in front of us. That was dead space on our flank with Eagle. And as they rolled in they didn't really become visible until they were about in the troop center of sector. We took those out with TOWs at a range of about 1500 to 2000 meters. And all this time the incoming artillery and incoming direct fire started getting heavier. And in fact at one point I had four high explosive rounds hit the berm right in front of me. The last one actually hit my six track, killed the gunner on my six track. Took that, blew that Bradley up...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I think I saw it back at the trains last night..

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes sir, the fight continued. We didn't start to get artillery until right after that. Then another wave came in. Another wave came in about 1830, and that was straight from the north, from the flank with the armored division. The terrain just, we were unfortunate in the fact that the wadi system, all the wadis emptied into the right hand, the northern side, the northern flank of ghost. The wadi coming out from the north, the wadi coming out from in front of Eagle and the hill complex just sort of forced everything into our positions. So for about six and a half hours we were in this fire fight. Where they were just doing the damndest to kill us. We were under the impression at first that they just couldn't see us until the fight started developing and we started taking more effective fire on our position. My six track got blown up the fist track behind the COLT team to a direct hit on their hatch, and it knocked their thermals out so we had to relay information back to him for adjusting fires. And we found out latter why they could see through this stuff that we could barely see through on our thermals, as we got into the area and were able to look at some of their vehicles. This is a night sight. That came off one of the command tanks.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Off of their's?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes sir, it has a four power magnification you hit the energize button on the top. And its as good as any thermals I've ever seen.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: This is a PV-4DS.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes sir. It's made in Holland.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Oldsmiths.. something like that..O.L.D.E.L.M.T.. It's like a set of Binoculars with intense magnification on it..got it

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Extremely effective..

? A good night vision device.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Almost like the LEROS (?). The Long range electro optical system that the MI was developing a few years ago.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yea.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: This is like a hand held version, instead of a track mounted version.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Do not switch on by daylight. All in English.

? Extremely good scope.

? With all the vehicles that we destroyed we pulled out the manuals we noticed that all the TMs on all the vehicles that we looked at were all in English. The BMPs, T72s, T55s, they were all in English.

? I've got a T55 over in my track right now. Its entirely in broken English but its still English.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: I want to try and take a picture of this thing before I leave, Ok lets continue.

? Their night vision devices are pretty good too, cause I have a setup what's similar to our PVS-5s over on one of my tracks. They are pretty damn good. We were looking through them last night. They're as good as our PVS-5s.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So that's how they were seeing you at those ranges in the dark.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes Sir, they were able to sneak several tanks in within a thousand meters. But initially when we started identifying tanks on the right flank, that's when I called up the commander and told him I needed a tanks section over in my area. He went to a troop scramble, where we go into a troop team. And I'm the team commander for "Viper team" and the other platoon leader for the scout platoon takes the other tank team. We pulled the tanks right up between the sections. They were not able to identify..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So you went to a combined platoon then?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yea. Basically two platoons. One platoon shy of the old H series, almost identical in function and formation.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OK.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: The Brads were able to see just a little better because of the masking terrain and the high winds kicking up dust. The higher power magnification. The standard fire command... when we do that everybody drops to scout net. The standard fire command was "tracer front." We would identify it with an HE or Sabot tracer. The tank would lose it and nail it.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Good, OK.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: In fact we had similar engagements to that our FIST was in a position to pick up an enemy tank forward of us. And we didn't observe him, and he fired his M60 machine gun and basically told First Platoon watch my tracer. And they hammered him they hammered the tank.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So, you were happy to have that system of target hand-off
Yea you were real happy to see that tank blow up. [laughter]

*****[fist] We were hitting him with a M60. [more laughter]

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Just a note on CPT McMaster's comment about tying in on the flanks and how difficult it was. The armored division to our north (3AD) we had an extremely difficult time tying in. I put a radio on their net, put a green radio on their net, and tried to find out where they were. They were approximately a kilometer behind us and when they were finally pulling up on line. The way we made positive identification was I had a Brad scan over identify their Bradley, his wing man was talking to that scout platoon, or that Bradley platoon from the Armor Division, and said there are two tanks front I'm taking the left one. He shot..Excuse me

the right one. He shot the one on the south. My section leader shot that one. They identified it and shot the other one.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So, coordinated fires between the Division and the Regiment.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Between Divisions, Yes Sir.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: But it happened at Platoon level. That's where it was key.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Roger, extremely important.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: That's right, that's right. And of course all the initially coordination that a at Regimental and Division level is important, but as long as leader know it. And it's not really emphasized at Knox, I don't think. But we just think we know cause it's an implied task. But it really the final nuts and bolts coordination happens at the platoon and troop level.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yep.

? Especially when you got a corps boundary like we started out with with 3rd ACR. If something had to go up all the way up to Corps and came back down from XVIII to VII Corps we wouldn't have gotten anything.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Right, exactly. So by tieing into their nets we immediately tapped into any intelligence they gathered, forward of them. And otherwise the lengthy process of going from 3rd ACR to XVIII Airborne to VII Corps to Regiment to Squadron and back to us, we circumvented that whole thing by just being on their nets.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: A little more about Golf Troops battle. How long did this thing...You said this thing raged for about six hours. How did it finally piece meal itself out.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: What happened finally was a.. The significant points during the battle were making contact, the establishing where the enemy was coming from, which route he would likely come from. And then there were three distinct waves, three assault waves. The first one was twelve tanks, the second one was about 14 tanks, and the last one was in excess of 18 tanks.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Were you able to support him at all?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yes we were in terms of hitting maybe what? Maybe about two or three vehicles at a time. And the wadi that Keith described obscured our vision at certain points. So we would pick them up ..destroy a tank with a TOW.. . and then Keith would see six of the ones that made it through.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: If you hadn't had an artificial limit of advance placed on you.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Oh, we would have precluded the whole thing. We would of

? We would have smoked them...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We had them.. We had them in an absolute route and if we had continued there is no doubt in my mind that a...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Well even if they had put a.. Even if you had stopped what I'm trying to get at ..What could you have done if you could have gone forward to support him?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: I could have intercepted them on their flank.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Set up an "L" shaped ambush.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Yes Sir, we appreciate that now but we didn't know it at the time.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: We had a dragon team setting on a berm about 20 feet high. They said we are setting on the 73 but we need to advance to get over this berm. We called up and they said no dice you stay on the 73. So the Dragon team was watching us shoot and fight and watching us taking incoming, they were having explosions on the front of their berm. I had a Bradley blowing up and burning, I had people getting hit, and all this time...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Because you were being force to set there on a line.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: We were forbidden to go up on the ground they needed to fight on.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: You know you should have just gone, I think you know you got to take initiative like that. Know in retrospect...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OH yea! Hind sight is 20/20. We always have to keep that in here.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: Exactly, we got to know. We have to, have to know that the commander on the ground will have to, will have to, in the future adjust any kind of artificial limit of advance. And in effect that is what we had done. That's why we wound up at the 73 and not the 70. Because we made contact at the 70, I called up LT Gibbons and I said "Hey, I'm sorry we're in contact, I'll let you know when we stop." And I think...

LT KIETH GARWOOD: I think the problem we ran into was we were already on the 73. We had cheated forward about half a kilometer and were told to get back.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So you could...

LT KIETH GARWOOD: I was on the air about three times with CAJUN the air strike. They told me flat out if you have anybody pass the 73 their dead. Just you can't do it. There is absolutely no question that if we had them forward they would have been a target. In fact the Apache's did come in and just started waxing everything. From the 73 east...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: When did the Apache's show up?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: The Apache's showed up about, just before dark.

Probably about 1830. The Apache's came in.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Yep.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: I think what a..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: But, we still had another six hours of battle going on, didn't we? We still had another four or five hours of battle.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes Sir, several hours of battle.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Did they come back? Return fire? Revisit?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: No Sir, they came in the one time. The Air never came on station. No actually they were on station. My FIST had them net once, COLT had them on the net twice, and then the COLTs targeting head went out and the FIST had his hands full. The FIST gave me a call and said, "Can you do the Air?" I said, "Roger", I dropped down to 30.30 got a hold of Bethel. Asked for the line up. Got the line up, two minutes out. We needed an IP to know which way the aircraft were coming in from. Grabbed the COLT, by the time I got back on the net with Bethel, the aircraft was diverted.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: You never got the Air so the 73 grid line turned out not to be a real problem.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Exactly.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And then there were the incredible artillery strikes going in forward of you guys, at the time. And to tie this in to Ghost in the sequence of the battle here, was that as we were calling for artillery forward of us but didn't need it, like Ghost needed it. So the artillery was doing the right thing in massing fires in front of Ghost. And I don't know what the effects were Keith, was that ...?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Extremely effective, the ICM round is now my favorite weapon. The tanks coming in, the second we hit them with ICM, we couldn't stop them with TOWs, with Tanks, the Choppers couldn't stop them. They continued to attack and advance. I don't know what they had in mind, or what they had been told.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Sounds like you had over a battalion plus just trying to drive in on one platoon.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes Sir, exactly what was trying to happen. They were just trying to overrun us, and they succeeded in getting up with in about 800 meters of our position at one time. And when we got the ICM on them you could see the difference between where it was striking the ground, cause there would be a small smoke explosion, and when it hit the top of the tank you would get a very large flash. And we had such a good concentration that on the final wave we were able to take out with the ICM we had two tanks explode immediately. Turrets flying, catastrophic kills.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: So, how many would you credit the artillery with?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: I can only account for ten positively.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: How many do you think the troop took out?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Over 50 to 60. In fact sir I have a... I tallied up the TOC reports. And a in our sector, Vipers sector, I couldn't really get a bearing what was going on in Blue, after the initially contact they had almost nothing, they were back into they took out 6 to 7 PCs. In Vipers sectors the TOC reports having 26 PCs, 67 tanks, and we just stopped reporting infantry after 30. And that was all that was reported...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: And those was ones that you shot?

LT KIETH GARWOOD: Yes Sir.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Not Air Force or anybody else.

LT KIETH GARWOOD: No sir, that's what we killed.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: OK

CPT H.R. McMASTER: As the situation was more stable, Ghost. The area that we observed on the way up to Ghost sector and were killing several of them and was the area that counterattacks came at us from. It was about the 75, so we called in a mission at what?

LT DANNY DAVIS: It was 76542..a..042.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: 042, where we had been observing some enemy movement. When we fired the first mission we got several secondary explosions. And, that's all the encouragement the artillery needed. And they just let loose a tremendous, tremendous barrage of DPICM, forward of our position and we could see tens of secondary explosions forward of us.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: What did it turn out to be?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We never got anyone forward to look at it.

LT DANNY DAVIS: PSYOPS team got part of the way. Well what had happened was we had the first brigade kind of like this with some high ground here. And when we where way back here at the 670 we got a TOW kill over here on the left flank on a tank and then we got a tank kill up here. And then we continued to roll, and when the CO rolled up here with his tank wedge that's when he started to spot them all on the back in reverse slope. And then when we stopped here on the 73 we got another tank kill on this high ground about right here and this tank kill on the far limit of our visibility. And there was nothing here. So I said we got these tanks here and there are two tanks here so after...I had tried to get fire on it earlier but they were in the middle of their fire fight. So I let them have all the artillery, we just kind of moved our mortars around here and were killing Infantry. But after theirs (G TRP) had pretty much stabilized and the artillery wasn't shooting any missions. I said, "well look I want to shoot one on the reverse slope back here and see if we get any explosions." So we fired the first one, first battalion mass, battalion 3 of DPICM. And we got all kinds of secondary explosions, so after two repeats we continued to get secondary explosions. I moved it around a

little bit, further in depth about 500 meters, because when they fire a battalion mass of DPICM you got a six digit grid called and they're covering about 600 meters wide and long with a battalion. So once we got and continued to get the secondary explosions, some of them rather dramatic, on the third repeat the squadron FSO called up to the Regimental FSO and said we'd really like to end their world here. So he got the Dragoon Battle Group to fire. We had 3-17, 6-41st FA, 3 HOW Battery, 2 HOW battery, and a MRLS Battery all fired on it on the last one. And I mean it covered the whole horizon. Our Regimental.. Squadron S3 called it the "Armageddon Strike." Because, I mean the whole horizon for like about 10 minutes was just nothing but those little sprinkles and then you could see explosions, sprinkles explosions, explosion, explosion. And then of course we really wanted to find our what in the heck we had hit. Because that battalion commander MAJ Mohammed he talked about earlier...

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And when the strikes were going in he was well forward. The POW collection point was behind our position. He was shaking his head saying "now they're all dead, they're all dead."

LT DANNY DAVIS: He told me that there was a Republican Guards National Guard Tank Battalion dug in up there as he was dug in up here, and we got a PSYOPS team to go up there and we were going to send them,. cause the terrain was like it was high here and there was a high like berm here, that was kind of separated here. They made it up to here and they found 30 supply type, he said there was thirty-five trucks all together. And he counted 30 of them that had been destroyed because he could see the pock marks of the ICM on them. And he was going to go up here because what we were really interested in was what it had done to the Armor back there.

But the Squadron recalled them and shortly after that the entire Squadron moved out and we were never able to actually confirm how many kills we had..

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Well there was a major supply operation back there. I drove through there. Dug in revetments, lots of ammo. lots of stuff stored everywhere, and a lot of the secondary explosions my guess, you hit their fucking stock piles and blew the shit out of them.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: You know I think that really...

MAJ SANDRIDGE: There were burned trucks in the revetments, trucks all over the fucking place.

CPT H.R. McMASTER: And you know I think we almost ought to write that into our doctrine as we pass, as we pass another unit through the Cavalry and when you are organized with such a tremendous artillery force like we had. Basically what we did de facto was to fire their Prep for them. I think we did them a great favor. Because as they passed through us this strike had just hit, and even if it had not completely destroyed the enemy position, it would have sufficiently rattled anyone out there that the sight of the 1st Infantry Divisions Armor just subsequent to that would have had a tremendous effect on the enemy.

MAJ SANDRIDGE: Real quick, cause I'm running out of tape here, tell me about the passage. How did that go?

CPT H.R. McMASTER: We were really not involved. What had happened, was Fox troop was detailed, given the mission to establish six passage lanes. Which I would feel is very generous in a 10 kilometer front sector for 1st Infantry Division 1st Infantry Division rejected the notion of any type of controlled passage through us, and I know its a good deal for them, but its not a good deal for us worried about them shooting us on the way through. They rejected it and said no we are going to travel in this zone, your lanes do not lend themselves to our scheme of maneuver. Its a 3 k wide zone and we will go in formation right through you. So the troops were almost limited at that point to vacating that terrain which really didn't effect us the way we were arrayed anyway, and watching their column roll pass us, putting on our recognition signals, and hoping the guys didn't hammer us, because there was no one there to guide them, and to describe to them on the ground these are where our positions are and this is what you will see as you pass through our positions. And it came off all right, but I think it was a dangerous operation, because it wasn't conducted the way we always trained. And plus we did take some friendly fire the next morning and had to vacate the 73. The next morning we were still up on the 73 taking some more prisoners, and a hail of small arms fire I think possible from a highly elevated coaxil machine gun landed on us.....

THIS TAPE ENDS HERE.